

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

24 August 2023

PRESENT:

Labour Group

Councillor R Pearson (Chair), Councillor L Singh (Vice-Chair) and Councillors S Harrison, A Haynes (substituting for Councillor G Rhind), M Mulgrew, B Stuart, S Taylor and A Tilley (substituting for Councillor N Tilley).

Conservative Group

Councillors M Fitzpatrick, S Meghani and P Watson (substituting for Councillor Ford).

Liberal Democrats

Councillor G Andrew.

In Attendance

Councillor A Archer
Councillor A Wheelton.

FM/24 **APOLOGIES**

The Committee was informed that apologies had been received from Councillors G Rhind and N Tilley (Labour Group) and Councillor Ford (Conservative Group).

FM/25 **TO RECEIVE THE OPEN MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:**

The Open Minutes of the Audit Sub-Committee meeting held on 21 June 2023 were noted with one amendment to AS/06 to clarify that the question raised by Members related to the Sheltered Housing – Careline 2022-23 item within the report.

FM/26 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Committee was informed that no declarations of personal interest had been received.

FM/27 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 10**

The Committee was informed that no questions from members of the public had been received.

FM/28 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11**

The Committee was informed that no questions from members of the council had been received.

FM/29 **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Committee was informed that no reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been received.

FM/30 **CORPORATE PLAN 2020-2024: PERFORMANCE REPORT (2023-2024 QUARTER 1 - 1 APRIL TO 30 JUNE)**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report to the Committee highlighting the progress against targets, the updated Risk Register and the eleven measures for the Committee.

Councillor Taylor referred to the importance of Health and Safety within the Council and was disappointed that training had dipped in that area together and requested an update regarding the post of Health and Safety Officer.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informed the Committee that a candidate had been interviewed for the post of Health and Safety Officer and an offer of employment would be issued shortly. The Health and Safety policy was expected to be completed during quarter three.

Councillor Harrison raised a query regarding apprenticeships and if there would be any other opportunities for young people noting that two additional positions had been proposed.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informed the Committee that a follow-up report would be provided.

Councillor Fitzpatrick noted that Health and Safety was an important part of the training schedule and suggested the inclusion of near misses in the report and asked for clarity on staff engagement, sickness and the green rating reported for commercialisation.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) confirmed that near miss reporting was included in the Employee Health and Safety Committee and that a Whistle Blowing policy was in place and staff sickness was monitored. It was explained that the green rating for the commercial target indicated that the measure was on track but that it would be followed up with the Head of Service.

The Chief Executive addressed the Committee and supported the response from the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informing the Committee that the Whistle Blowing policy was considerably robust, that the staff engagement sessions had been delivered to 50% of the workforce and would be followed by an Employee Survey in the Autumn and that staff sickness would be addressed by Human Resources with a benchmark exercise taking place across the East Midlands.

RESOLVED:

1.1 The Committee approved progress against performance targets set out in the Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024.

1.2 The Committee reviewed the Risk Register for the Committee's services.

FM/31 **Q1 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2023-24**

The Head of Finance presented the quarter one report to the Committee highlighting an overall improvement in the General Fund and favourable movement in the Housing Revenue Account. The Committee were informed of the new format for the report.

Councillor Taylor acknowledged the overspend on household waste and expensive older vehicles but recognised that the Fleet Management Plan would address these concerns. Councillor Taylor highlighted the good work done by Operational Services in taking on the recycling at short notice.

Councillor Harrison asked what timelines are in place for the Job Evaluation Framework report at Committee.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) informed Members that the People Strategy is part of the Council's forward planning and that the Head of Organisational Development would take the Job Evaluation Framework report to Council in February or March next year.

Councillor Fitzpatrick referred to point 3.3 of the report and the year end review of Ear Marked Reserves and asked if this review could take place quarterly, could business rates be reviewed more frequently and for clarity on capital monitoring.

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) confirmed that there was a significant amount of Ear Marked Reserves which would be reviewed with a potential transfer to the General Fund and further information would be provided to Members. The business rates reviews would need to be considered with any surplus and would then be verified.

The Head of Finance confirmed that a capital monitoring programme was not a contractor issue, but an allocation issue and further detail would be provided shortly to Members.

Councillor Meghani sought clarity on the item JPS recharge for indoor sports.

The Head of Finance confirmed that the JPS recharge referred to John Port Spencer Academy in Etwall.

RESOLVED:

1.1 The Committee noted the position and provided any comments it had on the latest revenue and capital financial position for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2023/24.

FM/32 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2023-24**

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members outlining the static borrowing position and that the overall net investment was positive.

RESOLVED:

1.1 The Committee noted the latest Quarter 1 updates in respect of Treasury Management, as per Appendix 1 of the report, Prudential Indicators and Limits, as per Appendix 2 of the report and Counterparty List for investments and bank deposits, as per Appendix 3 of the report.

FM/33 **COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS 01 OCTOBER 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2023**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the report and asked Members to note the increased interaction.

Councillor Fitzpatrick noted that Compliments and Complaints had increased for Housing and that service had improved.

RESOLVED:

1.1 The Committee considered and noted the comments, compliments, complaints, and Freedom of Information requests, as detailed in the report.

FM/34 **ELECTIONS – PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Chief Executive presented the report to the Committee.

Councillor Andrew observed that if there were restrictions for people to vote would an Equality Impact Assessment be appropriate.

The Monitoring Officer noted the observation.

RESOLVED:

1.1 The Committee approved the updated Public Engagement Strategy annexed to the report as Appendix 1.

FM/35 **SHARED PROSPERITY FUND**

The Head of Economic Development presented the report to the Committee highlighting the grant scheme for small business tenders was £25,000.00 and that the proposal was to increase this to £149,999.00 due to issues for applicants with larger projects.

Councillor Fitzpatrick questioned item 3.8 of the report as he was not comfortable with the commercial aspect and that there had been no pilot case.

The Head of Economic Development confirmed that a lot of support had been provided by Business Advisors over key concerns for private sector compliance. If the Council was directly involved its position may be difficult, however, in exceptional circumstances it could support a project for a small business.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the accountable body for the funding once control mechanisms were in place and explained the process for organisations to access the funding.

Councillor Fitzpatrick requested an example case be submitted to the Committee to demonstrate how helping and advising had been provided.

The Head of Economic Development noted the request.

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the following amendments to the Shared Prosperity Fund grant schemes, applicable until the conclusion of the programme on 31 March 2025:

- 1.1.1 That the threshold above which a tender procedure was required for grant recipients be raised from £24,999 (inclusive of VAT) to £149,999 (inclusive of VAT) for the procuring of goods/supplies and works (not services).***
- 1.1.2 That the waiver of quotations procedure be applied by the Council where a grant recipient was unable to get three competitive quotations.***
- 1.2 The Committee delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make amendments to the Shared Prosperity Fund programme and grant schemes during implementation and to approve procurements up to a threshold of £179,999 (inclusive of VAT) on a case by case basis.***

FM/36 **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) presented the updated work programme to the Committee. There were no reports listed for the meeting on 19 October and the Committee approved that this meeting was cancelled.

RESOLVED:

The Committee considered and approved the updated work programme.

FM/37 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 11

The Committee was informed that no questions had been received.

WRITE OFF: COUNCIL TAX; BUSINESS RATES; BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES AND HEALTH STAFFING 2023

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

PARK ROAD ACQUISITIONS

RESOLVED:

The Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

The meeting terminated at 18:50 hours.

COUNCILLOR R PEARSON

CHAIR